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Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Advancement of women

The critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/55/26) of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1 on the critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The draft resolution was adopted by the Third Committee on 6 November (see A/55/595 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 35, draft resolution VI).

2. As indicated in the Secretary-General's statement, under the terms of operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, in view of the difficult financial situation of the Institute, the General Assembly would decide to provide INSTRAW with financial assistance on a non-recurrent basis, in a fashion to be determined, so that the Institute would be able to continue its activities throughout 2001.

3. The Committee notes from paragraph 3 of the statement that the proposed financial assistance to the Institute through the United Nations regular budget would constitute a one-time exception to the provisions of article VI, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Institute, as amended by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2000/24, which indicates:

> "The activities of the Institute shall be funded by voluntary contributions from States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, foundations, including the United Nations Foundation, private sources and other sources in accordance with article VII of the statute."

4. The Committee notes from paragraphs 4 and 5 of the statement that the level of contributions to the INSTRAW Trust Fund has continued to decrease rapidly, declining from $1.9 million in 1992 to $602,150 in 1999, and that, so far in 2000, contributions received total $388,489 and unpaid pledges stand at $144,950. As at 1 January 2001, under the assumption that outstanding pledges of $140,000 will be collected, the Institute would have a balance for operations of some $350,000 (excluding a reserve of $200,000 set aside to cover final expenditures and liabilities in the event that the Institute has to be closed down). For 2001, on the basis of pledges made and historical patterns, the estimated contributions to the Institute would amount to about $90,000.

5. The Committee notes from paragraph 25 of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of INSTRAW (A/55/385) that, in spite of active efforts deployed by the secretariat and the Director of INSTRAW, the endorsement of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Board of Trustees, and the repeated urgent appeals to Governments, the level of contributions has continued to decrease markedly and there are no indications that the situation will improve. In this connection, the Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 13 of its resolution 54/140 of 17 December 1999, urged Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute or to consider increasing their contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for INSTRAW in order to facilitate the immediate implementation of the programmes and activities of the Institute. Moreover, the Committee notes from paragraph 27 of the report of the Secretary-General that, despite the efforts made by the secretariat of INSTRAW for the revitalization of the Institute, INSTRAW has not received the support and funds required to ensure its long-term institutional sustainability.

6. In paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/55/26), anticipated requirements of the Institute in 2001 are estimated at $1.3 million, of which only $350,000 would be available from the opening balance at 1 January 2001 and $90,000 from estimated contributions in 2001, resulting in an anticipated shortfall of $860,000. The Committee points out that it does not consider the budget estimates of INSTRAW and thus is not in a position to confirm whether the expenditure estimate of $1.3 million for 2001 is realistic.

7. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, in the light of the uncertainties regarding the level of resources available for expenditure in 2001, the Institute's budget for 2001 has not yet been prepared for submission to the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW at its next meeting, tentatively scheduled for the last week of March or the first week of April 2001. The estimates provided in the statement of the Secretary-General were based on the best assumptions that could be made at the time of the preparation of the document and, given the uncertainty regarding contributions, a non-recurrent financial assistance of $800,000 from the United Nations regular budget was proposed for the Institute, to be used in a fashion to be determined.

8. Taking into account what has been stated in the paragraphs above, the Committee is not in a position, from a technical point of view, to ascertain the basis and thus confirm the estimate of the Secretary-General. Moreover, given the phrase, "in a fashion to be determined" it would be for the General Assembly to indicate the

level and the manner in which the assistance should be provided to meet the anticipated shortfall referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 above.

9. Under the circumstances, should the General Assembly, by adopting draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.16/Rev.1, decide to provide the Institute with financial assistance, such additional requirements as are decided upon by the General Assembly would arise under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.